

Received

pg 1 of 2

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Office of PAGR

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PO Box 224

FREEPORT, KS

67049-0224

RE: DOCKET No: 1435561-67049

POSTAL REGULATORY

COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Postal Regulatory Commission:

I am appealing the Final Determination to close the Freeport, KS Post office & establish a Rural Route per the above Docket No.

Retail services that we receive now can not be duplicated by the service suggested by the ^{Postal} Service. A 13 or 11 or 16 mile trip one way must be made by the patrons in order to duplicate this service.

The above document is not factual: the last postmaster resigned in 1992. She, Mary Armstrong served as Post Master for 50 years here @ Freeport.

The above document states "when this final determination is implemented, delivery ~~and~~ retail services will be provided by the Argonia P.O." This service is now being ~~is~~ provided by the Anthony P.O. NOT ARGONIA. This change has been in effect for two months. This was a positive move for our area.

Pg 2 of 2

I would ask that the document # 1435561-67049 be updated by Postal personnel to its current status before the closing of our Freeport P.O. that has provided over 125 years of service to our community.

Our Freeport Post office deserves to go down in history with the CORRECT DATA.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Peter

CAROL A. PETERSON

P.O. Box 224

FREEPORT, KS 67049-0224

Thank you for your time and help in this matter.



Date of Posting: 10/27/2011

Date of Removal: 11/28/2011

FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE
THE FREEPORT, KS POST OFFICE
AND ESTABLISH
SERVICE BY RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

DOCKET NUMBER 1435561 - 67049

I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service is issuing the final determination to close the Freeport, KS Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Argonia Post Office, located 10 miles away.

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster resigned on February 01, 2006. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office. Postmaster level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue.

The office was studied for possible closing or consolidation due to the following reasons: The Postmaster position is vacant. The office has realized a decline in workload and customer demand the last three years.

The Freeport Post Office, an EAS-53 level, provides service from 08:30 - 10:30 Monday - Friday, 08:30 - 10:30 Saturday and lobby hours of 08:30 - 16:30 on Monday - Friday and 08:30 - 16:30 on Saturday to eight post office box or general delivery customers and 23 delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as Registered Mail, Certified Mail, Insured Mail, COD Mail, and Express Mail services; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail.

The retail window averaged six transaction(s) accounting for seven minute(s) of retail workload daily. With minimal workload, the Postal Service feels that effective and regular service will be provided by rural route service. Office receipts for the last 3 years were: \$7,872 (21 revenue units) in FY 2008; \$7,093 (19 revenue units) in FY 2009; and \$6,281 (16 revenue units) in FY 2010. There were no permit mailer(s) or postage meter customer(s).

On April 14, 2011, representatives from the Postal Service were available at Freeport City Hall to answer questions and provide information to customers. 14 customer(s) attended the meeting.

On April 07, 2011, 48 questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Freeport Post Office. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at the Freeport Post Office. 14 questionnaires were returned. Responses regarding the proposed alternate service were as follows: 0 favorable, 2 unfavorable, and 12 expressed no opinion.

When this final determination is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Argonia Post Office, an EAS-13 level office. Window service hours at the Argonia Post Office are from 08:00 12:30 -13:30 16:00, Monday through Friday, and 08:30 10:00 on Saturday. There are 251 post office boxes available.

The proposal to close the Freeport Post Office was posted with an invitation for comment at the Freeport Post Office and Argonia Post Office from July 26, 2011 to September 26, 2011. The following additional concerns were received during the proposal posting period:

1. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about package delivery and pickup
Response: The customer expressed a concern about package delivery and pickup. Rural carriers will deliver packages that fit in your rural mail box, if the package does not fit in the mail box, the carrier will deliver the package up to ½ mile off of the line of travel, at a designated place, such as on your porch or under a carport.
2. **Concern:** driving to another location and using rural carrier lack of concern from Post Office disability
Response: Most retail services provided at the post offices are available from the carrier and do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Listed below are some services available from the carrier and how to obtain them. **PURCHASING STAMPS BY MAIL** The Stamps by Mail Program provides customers the opportunity to purchase stamps, envelopes, and postal cards by using Stamps by Mail order form, available from the post office or the carrier. Commemorative stamps and stamp collecting products are also available. The customer addresses the postage paid order form envelope, encloses payment by personal check or postal money order made payable to the US Postal Service, and mails the form (postage-free) or leaves it in the mailbox for the carrier to pick up. Most orders are processed overnight, and some immediately. **SPECIAL SERVICES** Special services such as certified, registered, Express Mail, delivery confirmation, signature confirmation, and COD may be obtained from the carrier by leaving a note in the mailbox, along with the appropriate payment. The carrier will provide the services that day and leave a customer receipt in the mailbox on the next delivery day. **HOLDING MAIL** Customers who will be away for an extended time, such as a vacation, may request that their mail be held at the post office during their absence. Upon return the customer asks the post office to resume delivery. In hardship cases, delivery can be made to the home of a customer. Changes in the type of delivery are considered where

service by existing methods would impose an extreme physical hardship for an individual customer. Any request for a change in delivery method must be submitted in writing to the administrative postmaster. The Postal Service is required to provide each community with regular and effective service, using the most cost efficient means possible. The proposed alternate delivery service will meet the mailing and service needs of the community in a more cost effective manner.

3. **Concern:** Concern with Argonia KS being the administrative office
Response: Contractually the Postal Service must honor the rural carrier's established territory.
4. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox
Response: The customer also expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox. A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the suspended Post Office area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area. However, customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business.
5. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the inability of the rural carrier to weigh and rate letters and packages
Response: The customer expressed a concern about the inability of the rural carrier to weigh and rate letters and packages. The rural carrier will accept any letters or packages for mailing. The carrier will estimate the cost and provide a receipt for any money received. On the following delivery day the carrier will provide change or a bill for the amount over the estimate.
6. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern about collection of outgoing mail
Response: The customer expressed a concern about the collection of outgoing mail. Collection of mail will be made by the carrier when serving the route. The customer should raise the flag on the mailbox to alert the carrier that outgoing mail is to be collected from the mailbox.
7. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern over the dependability of rural route service
Response: The customer expressed a concern over the dependability of rural route service. Rural letter carriers perform a vital function in the United States Postal Service serving thousands of families and businesses in rural and suburban areas while traveling millions of miles daily. Rural letter carriers are highly respected by the American public. This respect has been earned by many years of dedication to the Postal Service and to postal customers. During national and local emergencies, including prolonged periods of extreme weather conditions, rural carriers have demonstrated great responsibility in providing mail service to postal customers. Rural carriers are required to serve the route expeditiously and arrive at boxes at about the same time each day.
8. **Concern:** Customers felt the route should emanate from Harper because that office is closer
Response: The customer expressed a question about where the route should emanate from. The delivery route has been carefully reviewed to ensure that the most cost-efficient service is provided. Although Harper KS is closer for some customers, Argonia KS is closer for others.
9. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about a change of ZIP Code
Response: The customer expressed a concern about a change of ZIP Code. The proposed change of the ZIP Code is necessary due to 911 addressing requirements.
10. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about later delivery of mail

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about delivery time. A customer's location on a carrier's line of travel determines the time of day mail is delivered. This, of course, precludes providing early delivery of mail to every customer because, no matter how we structure a route, somebody must be last. We do, however, carefully consider the volume of mail for each route so that we can deliver the greatest amount of mail at the earliest possible hour. With the largest fleet of delivery vehicles in the world we must pay special attention to energy conservation measures, to minimize vehicle and fuel expenses. When the price of gasoline goes up one cent per gallon our total gasoline cost rises more than \$8 million. Therefore, when structuring a route, we must balance our goal to deliver as much mail as possible as early as possible with the need to minimize the travel distance a route must cover.

11. Concern:

Customers were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier

Response:

The customer were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier, retail services provided at the post office are available from the carrier. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience. Listed below are some services available from the carrier and how to obtain them.

PURCHASING STAMPS BY MAIL

The Stamps by Mail Program provides customers the opportunity to purchase stamps, envelopes, and postal cards by using Form 3227-R, Stamp Purchase Order (Rural), available from the post office or the carrier. Commemorative stamps and stamp collecting products are also available. The customer addresses the postage paid order form envelope, encloses payment by personal check or postal money order made payable to the US Postal Service, and mails the form (postage-free) or leaves it in the mailbox for the carrier to pick up. Most orders are processed overnight, and some immediately.

PURCHASING POSTAL MONEY ORDERS

Customers may purchase money orders by meeting the carrier at the mailbox, completing an application, and paying the carrier (in cash) the price of the money order, plus the fee. The carrier gives the customer a receipt for the application. The money order is completed when the carrier returns to the post office, and a money order receipt is left in the customer's mailbox on the next delivery day. Most customers provide the carrier with a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which the completed money order is mailed to its destination. If customers prefer, the completed money orders will be returned for verification on the next delivery day.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Special services such as certified, registered, Express Mail, delivery confirmation, signature confirmation, and COD may be obtained from the carrier by leaving a note in the mailbox, along with the appropriate payment. The carrier will provide the services that day and leave a customer receipt in the mailbox on the next delivery day.

HOLDING MAIL

Customers who will be away for an extended time, such as a vacation, may request that their mail be held at the post office during their absence. Upon return the customer asks the post office to resume delivery.

12. Concern:

You were concerned about having to travel to another post office for service

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about having to travel to another post office for service. Services provided at the post office will be available from the carrier, and customers will not have to travel to another post office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience.

Some advantages of the proposal are:

1. The rural and contract carriers may provide retail services, alleviating the need to go to the post office. Stamps by Mail order forms are provided for customer convenience.
2. Customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail.
3. Savings for the Postal Service contribute in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
4. CBUs can offer the security of individually locked mail compartments. Parcel lockers provide convenient parcel delivery for customers.
5. Customers opting for carrier service will not have to pay post office box fees.
6. Saves time and energy for customers who drive to the post office to pick up mail.

Some disadvantages of the proposal are:

1. The loss of a retail outlet. Retail services may be provided by the rural or contract delivery carrier.
2. Meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier at the box to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions.
3. A change in the mailing address. The community name will continue to be used in the new address. A carrier route address will be assigned.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to the community.

II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY

Freeport is an incorporated community located in HARPER County. The community is administered politically by mayor and city council Freeport KS. Police protection is provided by the Harper County Sheriff. Fire protection is provided by the Anthony KS Fire Dept. The community is comprised of farm/ag related and those who commute to work at nearby communities and may work in local businesses.

Businesses and organizations include: Freeport Presbyterian Church City of Freeport Rural Water District 4, Stargazer Lewelland Inc Wheatridge Inc Coady Farms Greve Farms Schmidt Farms. Residents may travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Freeport Post Office will be available at the Argonia Post Office. Government forms normally provided by the Post Office will also be available at the Argonia Post Office or by contacting your local government agency.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed from questionnaires, the community meeting, on the petition, and on the congressional inquiry:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Concern: | Customer expressed a concern about their 911 address |
| Response: | The customer expressed a concern about your 911 address. 911 addresses are generally given by the county's 911 coordinator. The Postal Service does not establish 911 addresses. Any questions concerning your 911 address should be directed to the county's 911 coordinator. |
| 2. Concern: | Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity |
| Response: | The customer expressed a concern about the loss of the Communities' identity. A community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. The Postal Service is helping to preserve community identity. Your zip code and community name will not change. |
| 3. Concern: | Customers felt the post office should remain open since they paid taxes |
| Response: | The customer expressed a concern that since the people of your community paid taxes the post office should remain open. The Postal Service is not supported by tax dollars and must meet expenses by revenue it generates. Operational savings for the Postal Service contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers. |
| 4. Concern: | Customers were concerned about senior citizens |

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about senior citizens. Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to roadside mailboxes or CBUs. Customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the administrative postmaster for more information.

Based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will not adversely affect the community.

III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster resigned on February 01, 2006. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) may be separated from the Postal Service. No other Postal Service employee will be adversely affected. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office.

IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$ 20,749 with a breakdown as follows:

Postmaster Salary (EAS-53, No COLA)	\$ 15,350
Fringe Benefits @ 33.5%	\$ 5,142
Annual Lease Costs	<u>+ \$ 1,500</u>
Total Annual Costs	\$ 21,992
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	<u>- \$ 1,243</u>
Total Annual Savings	<u>\$ 20,749</u>

V. OTHER FACTORS

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

under the administrative responsibility of the Argonia Post Office, located 10 miles away.

The postmaster resigned on February 01, 2006. If the office has a noncareer PMR(s), they may be separated from the Postal Service; however, attempts will be made to reassign the employee(s) to a nearby facility. No other employee(s) will be adversely affected. The workload has declined. Effective and regular service will continue to be provided by rural route service.

The Freeport Post Office provided delivery and retail service to eight PO Box or general delivery customers and 23 delivery route customers. The daily retail window transactions averaged six. There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services may be available from a rural or contract delivery carrier, which could alleviate the need to travel to a Post Office for service. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$20,749 annually. A disadvantage to some will be in meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions with rural or contract delivery carrier.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this final determination is warranted.

VII. NOTICES

- A. **Support Materials.** Copies of all materials upon which this final determination is based are available for public inspection at the Freeport Post Office and Argonia Post Office during normal office hours.
- B. **Appeal Rights.** This final determination to close the Freeport Post Office may be appealed by any person served by that office to the Postal Regulatory Commission at 901 New York Ave NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20268-0001. Appeals must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the date this final determination is posted. If an appeal is filed, copies of appeal documents prepared by the Postal Regulatory Commission or the parties to the appeal will be made available for public inspection at Freeport Post Office and Argonia Post Office during normal office hours.



Dean J Granholm
Vice President of Delivery and Post Office Operations

10/24/2011

Date